

# John Hardy Vs. John

**HARDY, John.** The popular song "John Hardy" without doubt had its origin and development in West Virginia. The hero of this modern ballad was a Negro, whose prowess and fame are sung far and wide among his own race, and to a less extent among white folk. No written or printed statements concerning him are known to exist except an order in the courthouse at Welch, McDowell County, W. Va., for his execution. However, the statements hereinafter given are believed to be thoroughly reliable.

In a letter dated Charleston, W. Va., Feb. 16, 1916, addressed to Dr. H. S. Green of that city, and written by the Hon. W. A. McCorkle, governor of West Virginia from 1893 to 1897, occurs the following: —

"He [John Hardy] was a steel-driver, and was famous in the beginning of the building of the C. & O. Railroad. He was also a steel-driver in the beginning

notorious of his luck in all through 'greatest ever beloved by the southeast C. & O. I drink more and drive extent than country.

"The final exit women, can understood than a man find out with an idea to southwest p not positive his story a composite arise in the heart, very address, yet drunkard, as

"The son construction driving steel prowess of I enclose you

to Dr. H. S. Green of that city, and written by the Hon. W. A. McCorkle, governor of West Virginia from 1893 to 1897, occurs the following: —

"He [John Hardy] was a steel-driver, and was famous in the beginning of the building of the C. & O. Railroad. He was also a steel-driver in the beginning of the extension of the N. & W. Railroad. It was about 1872 that he was in this section. This was before the day of steam-drills; and the drill-work was done by two powerful men, who were special steel-drillers. They struck the steel from each side; and as they struck the steel, they sang a song which they improvised as they worked. John Hardy was the most famous steel-driller ever in southern West Virginia. He was a magnificent specimen of the genus *Homo*, was reported to be six feet two, and weighed two hundred and twenty five or thirty pounds, was straight as an arrow, and was one of the most handsome men in the country, and, as one informant told me, was as 'black as a kittle in hell.'

"Whenever there was any spectacular performance along the lines of drilling, John Hardy was put on the job; and it is said that he could drill more steel than any two men of his day. He was a great gambler, and was

not positive about it. His story is a strange composite character, arising in the land, heart, very strong address, yet a great drunkard, and a fier

"The song is a construction-camp driving steel in the prowess of John Hardy. I enclose you some in addition to the one course, you understand about John Hardy, Negroes. I cannot Hardy that you in the same John Hardy it may be so, for he in that vicinity who himself. He was on the C. & O. He was Virginia contractor Co., and the Langh

Mr. Ernest I. student of University, who Welch, and whom up the records of to report such could secure, in Sept. 14, 19 follows: —

"John Hardy

# John Hardy Vs. John Henry

**HARDY, John** The popular "John Hardy" without doubt had its origin and development in West Virginia. The rest of this modern ballad was a guess, whose powers and fame, going far and wide among his race, and to a less extent among white folk. No written or noted statements concerning Hardy are known to exist except as are in the courthouse at Welch, Powell County, W. Va., for his reputation. However, the events hereinafter given are proved to be thoroughly reliable. In a letter dated Charleston, Va., Feb. 16, 1916, addressed Dr. H. S. Green of that city, written by the Hon. W. A. Pickle, governor of West Virginia from 1893 to 1897, are the following: -

He [John Hardy] was a steel-driver, was famous in the beginning of the life of the C. & O. Railroad. He also a steel-driver in the beginning of the extension of the N. & W. road. It was about 1872 that he was in this motion. This was before the use of steam-drills; and the drill-work done by two powerful men, who were special steel-drivers. They struck steel from each side, and as they hit the steel, they sang a song which improved as they worked. John Hardy was the most famous of these men in southern West Virginia. He was a magnificent specimen of the great Negro, was said to be six feet two, and weighed two hundred and twenty five pounds, was straight as an iron, and was one of the most powerful men in the country, and, as the famous ballad says, was as black as ebony.

It is known there was only one other performance along the line since John Hardy was cut out of the

notorious all through the country for his luck in gambling. To the duty men all through the country, he was the "greatest ever," and he was admired and beloved by all the Negro women from the southern West Virginia line to the C. & O. In addition to this, he could drink more whiskey, sit up all night and drive steel all day, to a greater extent than any man ever known in the country.

"The killing in which he made his final exit was a 'mystery' between women, cards, and liquor; and it was understood that it was more of a fight than a murder. I have been unable to find out where he was hung, but have an idea that it was down in the southwest part, near Virginia; but I am not positive about this. In other words, his story is a story of one of the composite characters that so often arise in the land, - a man of kind heart, very strong, pleasant in his address, yet a gambler, a rascal, a drunkard, and a fierce fighter.

"The song is quite famous in the construction-camps; and when they are driving steel in a large camp, the powers of John Hardy is always sung. I enclose you some verses which are in addition to the ones you sent me. Of course, you understand that all this about John Hardy is merely among the Negroes. I cannot say that the John Hardy that you mention was hung is the same John Hardy of the song; but it may be so, for he was supposed to be in that vicinity when he last exploded himself. He was never an employee of the C. & O. He was an employee of the Virginia contractors, C. R. Mason & Co., and the Langhorn Company."

Mr. Ernest L. Kyle, a former student of West Virginia University, whose home is at Welch, and whom I asked to look up the records of the trial and also to report such other data as he could secure - in a letter dated

the trial was known as John Hardy of the F.O.C. Company was tried by the jury term of the Central Court in the courthouse at jail, he was John Hardy, and before he was captured the last infamy of the Criminal Court and is now in There is no record of John Hardy in the infamy me to the trial in order for John

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another Negro over a crap game at Shawnee Camp. This place is now known as Eckman, W. Va. (the name of the P.O.). The Shawnee Coal Company was and is located there. Hardy was tried and convicted in the July term of the McDowell County Criminal Court, and was hanged near the courthouse on Jan. 19, 1894. While in jail, he composed a song entitled 'John Hardy,' and sung it on the scaffold before the execution. He was baptized the day before the execution. The last information I got from W. T. Tabor, who was deputy clerk of the Criminal Court at the time of the trial, and is now engaged in civil engineering. There is no record of the trial of John Hardy in the courthouse. Mr. Tabor informs me that there is no record of the trial in existence. The only thing I could find at the courthouse was the order for John Hardy's execution."

The order is as follows: —  
State of W. Va.

vs.  
John Hardy,  
Felony.

This day came again the State by  
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the order for John Hardy's execution was the order for John Hardy's execution."

The order is as follows: —  
State of W. Va.

vs.

John Hardy,  
Felony.

This day came again the State by her attorney and the Prisoner who stands convicted of murder in the first degree was again brought to the bar of the Court in custody of the Sheriff of this County; and thereupon the Prisoner being asked by the Court if anything he had or could say why the Court should not proceed to pass the sentence of the law upon him in accordance with the verdict of the jury impanelled in this cause, and the Prisoner saying nothing why such sentence should not be passed upon him by the Court; It is therefore considered by the Court that the Prisoner John Hardy, is guilty as found by the verdict of the jury herein and that the said John Hardy be hanged by the neck until he is dead, and that the Sheriff of the County, on Friday the 19th day of January 1894, take the said John Hardy from the jail of the County to some suitable place to be selected by him in this County and there hang the said John Hardy by the neck until he is dead, and the prisoner is remanded to jail.

The following statement was given by Mr. W. T. Tabor to Mr.

Officers had to thirty men be safely be concluded in Woodmont Welch."

The state Johnson, cons arrest Hardy, Charles V. reporter at We conversation and Judge He me in the earl 1917. It follow

"I was at R that Hardy kill couldn't tell ye now. They we Shawnee can crap-shooting, behind a rock w is supposed that man that he Winchester to ge killed they sent and Tom Campbe search the camp searching the cam they go, down th on the railroad at the old bridge they turned up th 'We will follow it says, 'No, we can' woods; they have good a gun as we back and decided Me and some on

H. J. Grossman, principal of the High School at Welch, and by him forwarded to me.

"John Hardy: Negro, about forty years of age; black in color; from Virginia; worked as miner in coal-fields; had no family as known; killed another Negro in a crap game over 75 cents; another Negro named Guggins helped him escape and tried to wrest gun from sheriff to shoot, but both men were captured and returned to Welch. Guggins was given a life term for attempt to kill sheriff.

"Hardy hung in '94 in present courthouse yard, though not such at the time. At time of execution some white man in the crowd started a panic by yelling, 'O Lordy! O Lordy!' Officers had to jail some twenty-five or thirty men before execution could safely be concluded. Hardy lies buried in Woodmont addition to town of Welch."

The statement of R. L. Johnson, constable, who helped

in Woodmont addition to town of Welch."

lows: -

'a.

The statement of R. L. Johnson, constable, who helped arrest Hardy, as compiled by Mr. Charles V. Price, shorthand reporter at Welch, W. Va., from a conversation between Johnson and Judge Herndon, was sent to me in the early part of the year 1917. It follows: -

"I was at Keystone the morning that Hardy killed this fellow, but I couldn't tell you the fellow's name now. They were shooting craps at Shawnee camp, and he was crap-shooting, and Webb Gudgin was behind a rock with a Winchester, and it is supposed that if Hardy didn't get the man that he was there with a Winchester to get him. After he was killed they sent to Keystone, and me and Tom Campbell went down there to search the camps; and while we were searching the camps they said, 'Yonder they go, down the road!' and we got on the railroad and followed them to the old bridge below Shawnee, and they turned up the hollow, and I says, 'We will follow them up there.' Tom says, 'No, we can't follow them in the woods; they have got a Winchester, as good a gun as we have got.' So we went back and decided to watch the trains. Me and some one, I think it was

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Harvey Dillon, was watching Northfork station. They got on the train at Groves, and they got there; and when they went to handcuff Hardy, Gudgeon was walking through the coaches, and every one went out to get Gudgeon, and he made to jerk John off the train; but John held to him till they got the train stopped, and they sent a colored fellow back there to help him, and they put him on the train and brought him back to Keystone. George Dillon and I took charge of him. John wasn't able to stay up. We took charge of them and guarded them that night, and they come and threatened to lynch him, and we said they couldn't come up there, and Webb said if we would unhand off him and give him his gun nobody would come up there. We had him over Becker's store.

"I believe I come down the next morning and put them in jail. I never knew anything more about the case until the trial. I was down here during the trial. After he was found guilty he wanted to be baptized. We took him down there to the river, and I was along with him when they baptized him. I forget what preacher baptized him. He had on a new suit of clothes, hat and everything, but he didn't like the looks of his shoes at all. I took them back and swapped them; and when he put them on and viewed himself he had on the best suit he ever had, the way I looked at it. He was about six feet two, I think, or maybe he might have been six foot three."

JUDGE HERNDON. Give his color, before you start on Gudgeon.

MR. JOHNSON. He was black.

JUDGE HERNDON. About what age?

MR. JOHNSON. Well, I couldn't hardly tell you. I would figure him about thirty.

JUDGE HERNDON. Now give a description of Gudgeon.

MR. JOHNSON. Well, Gudgeon, I believe, was a little taller than I am. I believe about six feet, heavily built. He wasn't so fleshy, but he was heavy built, yellow.

JUDGE HERNDON. Were you deputy sheriff at the time?

MR. JOHNSON. I was constable.

JUDGE HERNDON. Campbell was deputy sheriff?

MR. JOHNSON. Yes.

Effler was the sheriff of McDowell County at that time?

MR. JOHNSON. Yes, sir. JUDGE HERNDON. In the town of Welch now do you know about the spot where the scaffold was built?

MR. JOHNSON. Why, I could get out here and look it up, but I was right out here somewhere.

MR. DAVID COLLINS. It was right back of the old temporary jail.

JUDGE HERNDON. You say you don't remember the name of the man John Hardy killed?

MR. JOHNSON. No, I don't remember him.

JUDGE HERNDON. But do you remember what they killed him for?

MR. JOHNSON. They were shooting craps. It is my understanding they had had the crap game below, and that fellow had skinned Hardy, and he went back started the crap game to get to kill him. That was the statement at the time.

JUDGE HERNDON. In other words, this colored man that Hardy killed had skinned Hardy in the game before that game?

MR. JOHNSON. Yes, sir, and Hardy goes down and starts a crap game, and Webb was behind the rock with his Winchester so if Hardy tried he would get him. That was the statement, what they claimed when they came after us, when we went down there.

JUDGE HERNDON. Where was he from?

MR. JOHNSON. I don't know. I might have heard, but I never paid any attention. We were out nearly all night that night. I recollect it well. I think it was about the first year John Effler was elected sheriff. My recollection is that the time Hardy killed the other colored man was along some time during the first of the year, in 1893, and that he was tried along about April or May, 1893, and hanged soon after his conviction, about sixty days.

Mr. A. C. Payne, English, W. Va., in a letter dated Oct. 16, 1917, writes me as follows: -

"Just received your letter requesting information of a Negro

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about 6 feet high and about 25 years old, as well as I could guess at him. He killed a Negro boy about 19 years old. And he was a very black Negro. That is about all I know about him."

The above-quoted statements seem to establish two groups of facts:—

1. (a) That about the year 1872 there was a certain John Hardy employed as a steel-driller in railroad-construction in the southern part of West Virginia. This man was a very black Negro, six feet tall, or more, of splendid physique, a drinker, a gambler, a roue, and a fierce fighter.

(b) That later this Negro killed a man in an altercation of some sort in which gambling played a part.

(c) That the murder and execution took place in the southern part of the State, near the Virginia line.

2. (a) That in the year 1893 a certain John Hardy was employed as a coal-miner in the extreme southern part of West Virginia. This man was a very black Negro, six feet two or three inches tall, and a gambler.

(b) That this John Hardy killed a man over a crap game for the sum of seventy-five cents.

(c) That the murder and execution took place in the southern part of the State, near the Virginia line.

The identity of these two men is not established, but the inference that they are the same is extremely probable. That two men of the same name and race, so nearly alike in physique, habits, and characteristics, should meet the same fate, for the same crime, in the same locality, is hardly believable.

The consideration of the age of the Hardy of 1893 is important in determining whether he and the Hardy of 1872 are identical. The

prowess of the steel-driller of 1872 indicates a man of mature age, let us say twenty-four or twenty-five. In 1893 he would then have been forty-five or forty-six. Three of the men connected with the trial of Hardy have given estimates of his age as follows: Taber, assistant clerk of the Criminal Court, forty; Johnson, constable, thirty; Payne, jurymen, twenty-five. The value of these estimates depends upon two things.—First, accuracy of memory in recalling, after a lapse of twenty-four years, such details of feature as would enable one to judge of age; and, second, the ability of the witness to make such a judgment. Mr. Johnson says, "I couldn't hardly tell you about what age, I would figure him about thirty." The statement itself indicates much uncertainty about the matter. Mr. Payne says, "About twenty-five years old, as well as I could guess at him." Evidently at the trial Hardy's age was not brought out, or at least not emphasized enough to be remembered, and a guess by memory after twenty-four years may not be worth much. Mr. Taber says, "About forty years of age." Mr. Taber was deputy clerk of the court that tried Hardy, and is now engaged in civil engineering. His statements indicate a better-trained and more accurate type of mind than the others, and have a directness that is scoring. In any case, the judgment of the age of a Negro of the splendid physical type of Hardy is a difficult matter, hard to come at within ten years, and more likely to be underestimated than overestimated. In my judgment, the testimony may well point to an age considerable in excess of forty.

Mr. H. S. Walker, a man of mature years, a student in West Virginia University from Fayette

County, through which the C. & O. runs, reports the following as a current belief where he lives:—

John Hardy, a Negro, worked for Langhorn, a railroad contractor from Richmond, Va., at the time of the building of the C. & O. Road. Langhorn had a contract for work on the east side of the Big Bend Tunnel, which is in the adjoining county of Summers, to the east of Fayette County; and some other contractor had the work on the west side of the tunnel. This was the time when the steam-driller was first used. Langhorn did not have one, but the contractor on the other side of the tunnel did; and Langhorn made a wager with him that Hardy could, by hand, drill a hole in less time than the steam-drill could. In the contest that followed, Hardy won, but dropped dead on the spot. He tells me, also, that there is a current report in this part of the State concerning a John Hardy who was a tough, a saloon frequenter, an outlaw, and a sort of a thug. He thinks this John Hardy was a white man, and he is sure that he was hanged later on for killing a man in McDowell County or across the line in Virginia.

Probability indicates that these two stories are about the same man. For a white man contemporary with the steel-driller to possess the same name and attributes as he, to operate in the early part of his career in the same region, to drift later to the same locality, to commit the same crime, and to pay the same penalty, is not believable.

There remains the belief that John Hardy died from the effects of the drilling-contest in answer to inquiries concerning this. Dr. G. W. McDowell writes, "You are mistaken when you say John Hardy died from the

drilling-contest." In support of the belief, however, there is a ballad called "The Steel Driver," not as yet found in West Virginia, but reported by Shearn in his *Syllabus of Kentucky Folk-Songs*, p. 19, as follows:—

"THE STEEL DRIVER, A. 1a1b4c3b. B: John Henry, proud of his skill with sledge and hand-drill, competed with a modern steam-drill in Tunnel No. Nine, on the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad. Defeated, he desisted, asking to be buried with his tool at his breast."

The change of name to John Henry, and the victory into a defeat, is not significant, and is easily accounted for by oral transmission. The same process of reasoning as applied heretofore identifies John Henry with John Hardy, who could not have died at the end of a drilling-contest. Most likely the ballad celebrating the prowess of John Hardy gradually, in its earlier making, enhanced that prowess, and, by the natural tendency to a tragic ending, finally sang of his defeat and death.

Whether the drilling-contest be fact or fiction, is not important. However, it could hardly have happened. A note addressed to the Ingersoll-Rand Company, to whom I was referred as authority on drills, brings the following statement in a letter dated New York City, Dec. 19, 1917:—

"Your letter of Dec. 4, addressed to the Company at Easton, Pa., has been referred to us, and in reply we would advise you that, although we have no definite records, it is rather improbable that steam rock-drills were used in the building of the C. & O. Railroad. As you will see from the rest of the attached advertisement, machine-drills were first used about 1866; but their use was very limited, and not at all general."

The portion of the advertisement above referred to

that is significant, is as follows:—

"The first use of the steam rock-drill was in 1866, and it has since been used in many places. Most of the work done in the building of the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad was done by hand-drills, which had no mechanical parts, and were used in the same way as the hand-drill of 1866, when the first step in the

The Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad was built from Sulphur Springs to Huntington—

across the State of Virginia—in 1866. Two versions of the story are told, with a total of 100 men.

One version says that the men were so tired and discouraged that they drank and got drunk, and the exception of the

ballad deals with the hanging of the hanging, as clearly stated, in the hanging of the hanging.

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The number of men increased to 100, and the number of men increased to 100.

1861 is significant for this discussion, is as follows:—

"The first time rock-drills were used in big work was at the Hoosier Tunnel, year 1866. Here the Barlogh drill failed because of great repairs. Next came the Musconetcong Tunnel, Lehigh Valley R. R., driven from end to end with the Ingersoll drill, which had been brought to a practical stage in rock-work on Fourth Avenue, New York, for the horse-car tunnel. That covers the period up to 1873, when the Band Little Giant made a step in advance."

The Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad was completed westward from Sulphur Springs to Huntington—that is, entirely across the State of West Virginia—in 1873.

Two versions of the ballad, with a total of five variants, have come to hand. Version *a* gives us something with the very atmosphere of the construction-camp, its rough gang of illiterate Negroes, its profanity, and its glorification of a gambler, a drunkard, and a murderer. With the exception of stanzas 2 and 3, the ballad deals with the episode of the hanging, in some way not clearly stated, and connected with gambling. The name of the place, Shawnee Camp, is exactly correct, but the number of men killed is increased to two, and the murderer is caught because he refused to run. Not only does the bulk of the ballad deal with this incident in the career of John Hardy, but the prominent places, at the beginning and the end, are given to it. The older incident of the steel-drilling contest is, however, clearly remembered and vigorously expressed, though evidently on the way to forgetfulness. This version stands half way, as it were, between the "Steel Driller" listed by Shearlin and version *b*.

In version *b* the steel-driller has dropped out of memory

entirely. Shawnee Camp has become a Chinese camp,—an easy change,—and consequently the man killed is a Chinaman. The yellow girl with her money is still in the game, and a man is killed in a gambling-brawl. The reference to the Big Bend Tunnel is probably a cross-reference from another West Virginia ballad (namely, "The Wreck on the C. & O. Road") very popular in the southern part of the State, and contemporary in growth with that part of "John Hardy" since 1894. The last two stanzas, given to John Hardy himself, furnish an interesting reference to a fact in his history (namely, his baptism before hanging), and may be a remnant of the song he composed and sang just before his death. The introduction of the conventional ballad element of having the hero's mother and sweetheart come to see him is to be noted in stanzas 6 and 7.

Versions *c*, *d*, and *e* are variants of version *b*. In *c* the Negro gambling-dive is exalted to a "Wild West show" (stanza 2), and the conventionalizing process is carried further in stanza 6 by giving him a "pretty little wife," whom he kept "dressed in blue," and who had always been true to him. In *d* the yellow girl becomes a less shadowy personage, upon whom is bestowed the high-sounding, romantic name, Rosella (stanza 2). The refusal of the Court to grant bond to a "murderer" man in stanza 6 is a good bit of realism, with which, no doubt, the Negro singers of this ballad were fairly familiar. The reference to his baptism fails to appear. In *e* the conventionalizing process goes on apace: the father is introduced, the hero is blessed with three children, and two stanzas (7 and 8) from *The Law of Rock Royal* (Child, No. 76) are inserted.

As a result of this study, the following things appeal to me as significant:—

1. The origin in our day of such a ballad among an illiterate and comparatively primitive people.

2. The testimony of spontaneous composition of stanzas by men engaged in the hard work of steel-drilling.

3. The two groups of facts in Hardy's life centering respectively about the dates 1872 and 1894, which furnish the nuclei for three types of ballad as to content: (a) John Hardy, the steel-driver; (b) John Hardy, the steel-driver and the murdered; (c) John Hardy, the murderer.

4. The unreliability of statements in the ballad; and the difficulty, even at this early date, of determining the facts on which the song is based.

5. The passing of the song into the possession of white folk; and the rapid introduction on conventional elements of balladry. All the copies of the ballad in my possession were communicated by white people.

"John Hardy" is recorded elsewhere as follows:—

SHEARIN AND COMBS, *A Syllabus of Kentucky Folk-Song*, p. 19. "John Hardy," II, 4a3b4c3b, 6. — An account of Hardy's shooting a man in a poker-game, of his arrest, trial, conviction, conversion, and baptism; and of his execution and burial on the Tag River.

— *Ibid.*, "The Steel Driver," II, 4a3b4c3b, II. — John Hardy, proud of his skill with sledge and hand-drill, competes with a modern steam-drill in Tunnel No. Nine, on the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad. Defeated, he dies, asking to be buried with his tools at his breast.

JOURNAL OF AMERICAN FOLK-LORE, 22:347. — A North Carolina version of four stanzas contributed by Miss Louise Rand Bascorn, in which John Hardy shot a man in New Orleans Town, as he is

made to say, "for the sake of her love." The fact of his baptism is mentioned.

*Ibid.*, 22:248-250. — Louise Rand Bascorn reports from North Carolina "John Hardy," which she says begins, —

"Johnie Hardy was a hard worker"  
He died with his hammer in his hand."

*Ibid.*, 26:163-168. — Five variants of "John Hardy" reported by E. C. Sparrow. The first four are brief, and the only significant lines are, —

"This ole hammer killed John Hardy,  
Drove'n' Steel, Baby, drove'n' steel."

The fifth is a ballad of eight stanzas, obtained from Kentucky mountain whites. In it John Hardy is steel-driver, who competes with a steam-driller in a big tunnel, apparently on the C. & O. line. He leaves a faithful wife to mourn his death.

*Ibid.*, 26:180-182. — Variant *c* of this study, communicated by the present writer; also printed in *Two Virginia School Journal and Educator* 44:216-217 (September, 1913).

*Ibid.*, 27:249. — Reported by title, "That's the Hammer killed John Hardy," from South Carolina, by Henry C. Davis.

*Ibid.*, 28:14. — Communicated by John A. Louisa, as being sung along the Chesapeake and Ohio Road in Kentucky and West Virginia. John Hardy, the best steel-driver on the C. & O. Road, competes with a steam-drill in Tunnel No. Nine, beats it by an inch and a half, and lays down his hammer and dies.

CAMPBELL AND SHARP, *English Folk-Songs from the Southern Appalachians*, pp. 257-258: "John Hardy." — A ballad in nine stanzas. Nothing is said of steel-driving, and the hero takes his partner for life even in the "Shunamy Camps" (Shannon Camp). Hardy is evidently thought of as a white man, for the reader is told "For the sake of my blue-eyed girl." The fact of his baptism is mentioned, and two stanzas from "The Lin of Rock Hovay" are inserted, the same stanzas as in variant *c* of the present study.

FRANK C.  
Leland-Literary  
Carolina (paper  
knowledge and the  
South Annual)

Communicated by  
Lionel W. McColl

1. John Hardy  
He came  
He killed me  
Cause he  
You don't

2. John Hardy  
He went  
The rock was  
Then he  
He had it

3. John Hardy  
The steel  
"Johnie Hardy"  
I'd do it  
I'd do it

4. John Hardy  
So much  
Long come it  
Said "John"  
You won't

5. John Hardy  
The girl was  
He showed me  
The steel  
He won't  
I'd do it

And I don't care a damn what I say;  
I don't care a snap for the police."  
But they let John Hardy get away, poor boy!  
They let John Hardy get away.

*(Version c.)*

(Communicated by Mr. Lee C. Wooddell, Durbin, Pocahontas County, who obtained it from Mr. Ernie Wright, Hosterman, Pocahontas County.)

1. John Hardy he was two years old,  
Sitting on his mother's knee:  
"The Big Ben Tunnel on the C. & O. Road  
Is going to be the death of me, poor boy,  
Is going to be the death of me, poor boy."
2. John Hardy went into a Wild West show,  
Playing at a fifty-cent game:  
"Whoever wins my fifty cents,  
I'm going to blow out his brains, poor boy!  
I'm going to blow out his brains, poor boy."
3. John Hardy laid down a twenty-dollar bill,  
And he didn't ask for change:  
"All I want is a forty-four gun  
To blow out another nigger's brains, poor boy!  
To blow out another nigger's brains, poor boy!"
4. John Hardy went to New Port,  
Expecting to be free.  
The detective patted him on the back:  
"John Hardy, go along with me, poor boy!  
John Hardy, go along with me, poor boy!"
5. "I've been to the East, I've been to the West,  
And I've been all over the world;  
I've been to the river to be baptized,  
But I'm on my hanging-ground, poor boy!  
But I'm on my hanging-ground, poor boy!"
6. John Hardy had a pretty little wife,  
He kept her dressed in blue.  
When she heard that John was dead,  
"John Hardy, I've been true to you, poor boy!  
John Hardy, I've been true to you, poor boy!"

*(Version d.)*

(Communicated by Mr. John B. Adkins, Branchland, Lincoln County, who obtained it from David Duck, an old humpo-player.)

*(Version c.)*

(Communicated by Mr. Lee C. Wooddell, Durbin, Pocahontas County, who obtained it from Mr. Ernie Wright, Hosterman, Pocahontas County.)

1. John Hardy he was two years old,  
Sitting on his mother's knee;  
"The Big Ben Tunnel on the C. & O. Road  
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But I'm on my hanging-ground, poor boy!  
But I'm on my hanging-ground, poor boy!"
6. John Hardy had a pretty little wife,  
He kept her dressed in blue.  
When she heard that John was dead,  
"John Hardy, I've been true to you, poor boy!  
John Hardy, I've been true to you, poor boy!"

## THE JOHN HENRY HAMMER SONG

A

Mrs. Sidney Wilson, Minnehaha Springs, W. Va. Mrs. Wilson obtained this version from her brother, a man well acquainted with construction camps in the South.

This old hammer, -- hah,  
Killed John Henry, -- hah,  
This old hammer, -- hah,  
Killed John Henry, -- hah,  
This old hammer, -- hah,  
Killed John Henry, -- hah;  
Killed him dead, -- hah.

Ain't no hammer, -- hah,  
In these mountains, -- hah,  
Ain't no hammer, -- hah,  
In these mountains, -- hah;  
Ain't no hammer, -- hah,  
In these mountains, -- hah,  
Rings like mine, -- hah.

Take this hammer, -- hah,  
And give it to the walker, -- hah;  
Take this hammer, -- hah,  
And give it to the walker, -- hah;  
Take this hammer, -- hah,  
And give it to the walker, -- hah;  
For I'm goin' home, -- hah.

I told Hattie, -- hah,  
To whip-a those children, -- hah;  
I told Hattie, -- hah,  
To whip-a those children, -- hah;  
I told Hattie, -- hah,  
To whip-a those children, -- hah;  
Make 'em mind, -- hah.

'Cause the penitentiary, -- hah,  
Is full o' people, -- hah;  
'Cause the penitentiary, -- hah,  
Is full o' people, -- hah;  
'Cause the penitentiary, -- hah,  
Is full o' people, -- hah;  
Won't raised right, -- hah.

I told Hattie, -- hah,  
 To make her dress a little longer, -- hah,  
 I told Hattie, -- hah,  
 To make her dress a little longer, -- hah;  
 I told Hattie, -- hah,  
 To make her dress a little longer, -- hah;  
 A - showin' of her leg, -- hah.

## B

Newton Redwine. Mr. Redwine says: "John Henry had no regular song to sing as he worked, but it seems that the following was his favorite just before his death." The Beattyville Enterprise, Beattyville, Ky., Feb. 1, 1909.

I have hammered  
 Four long years  
 With this old hammer

I have hammered  
 On the W & A  
 I have hammered  
 On the old M & C  
 I have worked  
 On the C & S

The hammer am a ringin'  
 And the steel am a ringin'  
 I'll put the hole  
 On down boys  
 Put the hole on down

This old hammer  
 Killed John Scott  
 It will never kill me

Hammer am a ringin'  
 Steel am a ringin'  
 I'll put the hole  
 On down boys  
 I'll put the hole  
 On down - hut - hut - hut

Hut - hut - hut  
 I'll put the hole on down  
 I'll put the hole on down

This old hammer  
 Has killed John Scott  
 It will never kill me  
 Hut - hut - hut

I'll put the hole on down, boys  
 I'll put the hole on down